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The role of County Government on Service Provision in Early Childhood Development Education Centres in Elgeyo Marakwet County: a Case of Keiyo South Sub-county Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the county government on service provision in Early Childhood development Education Centres in Elgeyo Marakwet County: Keiyo South Sub-County Kenya. To achieve this study sought to establish the extent to which devolution has enhanced availability of instructional materials in ECDE centres and to examine the influence of devolved government on infrastructural development. The study used an exploratory descriptive survey design. The entire Sub-County has 136 public ECDE centers thus the population comprised of 1 DICECE Program Officer, 136 head teachers and 408 ECDE teachers. The sample size population was 151 respondents. The sample size comprised of 1 DICECE Program Officer, 14 Head teachers, and 136 ECDE1 parent representatives. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical method. Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. Qualitative data was analyzed by arranging the responses thematically in line with the objectives of the study. Based on the study findings it was noted that sub-county government of Keiyo South has not provided adequate instructional material, though the Sub-county government has provided funds which have been used in classroom construction of ECDE centres, however little has been done in providing teachers with teaching materials as well as equipping and developing new libraries. It was also noted that the Sub-county has not provided enough funds to procure text books and outdoor play materials in the centres. Based on the findings it was recommended that the county government and TSC should provide proper housing, providing medical allowances and ensure that the school working conditions is safe. There is also need for all stakeholders to contribute financially and materially in the provision of instructional materials and resources as well as infrastructural development in Keiyo Sub-County. Based on the results of the study it is suggested that a comparative study be done between the role of the central government and the county government on provision of service in ECDE centres.

Key words: *Devolution, Instructional Materials, Provision of Service, Early Childhood Education, Infrastructure.*

Introduction

Most of the African countries face many challenges in terms of improving basic education ECDE included (UNESCO, 2001). In the UNESCO (2012) Education for All global monitoring report goal No. 1 on expanding early childhood education care and education indicated that Early childhood is a critical period that lays the foundation for success in education and beyond; therefore early childhood care and education should be at the centre of EFA and broader development Agendas. ECDE includes early training, and learning as well as, the conveyance of basic health care, adequate nutrition, fostering and stimulation within a caring

environment (Kabiru and Njenga, 2001). Several international bodies have under-scored the importance of ECDE and policies have been developed in reinforcement of the same. However, there are many factors that work against the quality of ECDE in Kenya in diverse ways. There are several ECDE centres established by the government and others by the private sector and this implies that most children have access to ECDE. Nevertheless, the quality of education in most of the schools is threatened by conflict, malnutrition, poverty, and ignorance among the stakeholders involved.

Kenya enacted the children Act in 2001 which to date is a legal instrument which protects children as

well as advocating for them (Kabiru & Njenga, 2001). According to Muriu (2002) the efforts of the various stakeholders culminated in the development of national Early Childhood Development Policy Framework. The structure offers principles of ECDE and outlines duties of partners in the delivery of services to young children. The implementation of the policy aimed at ensuring heightened access, equity, quality, financing and effectual management of ECDE amenities. Early Childhood Development Policy Framework can either create a conducive or unconducive environment for young children. To adequately take care of the three groups several agencies or institutions are of paramount importance. This is in undertaking certain roles and responsibilities to enhance access, equity and quality of ECDE. Keriga & Bujra (2009) note that the framework clearly outlined the roles of various institutions in promoting ECDE services.

Kabiru (1992) points out that among the problems retarding the development of pre-school education in Kenya is support materials. Teachers cannot effectively implement the NACECE curriculum unless they are given tools of trade in form of facilities and materials. Kabiru and Njenga (2001) also note that quality service in pre-school is being hindered by lack of facilities necessary for holistic development, such as play materials and nutrition and health support programmes. Gross Giacquinta & Bernstein (1971) posited that factors such as clarity and awareness of curriculum, teacher competence, support by management, availability of facilities, materials and the attitude of stakeholders have an influence on the outcome of an innovation. In Keiyo south sub-county access, equity and quality of education services have been constrained by various factors, which include insufficient number of trained teachers and care givers, inadequate number of ECDE Centers, limited availability of teaching and learning/play materials, limited community participation, low morale of teaching staff due to poor remuneration, poor enforcement of ECDE standards and inadequate nutrition and health support services. There is need, therefore, to look into service provision at ECDE under the devolved government in Keiyo south sub-county in Kenya which has devolved early childhood education (County of Government of Elgeyo Marakwet, 2015).

According to the fourth schedule on the constitution, the county government is responsible for managing ECDE in the county and sub-county

level including provision of basic instructional material while the National government retains the responsibility for policy, standards and curriculum development. The terms instructional resources and teaching/learning resources or materials have been used inter-changeably by different authors. Bishop (1985) refers to teaching learning resources as all the things teachers are likely to find useful in their teaching. These could be collection of books, reference materials, maps, diagrams, newspaper cuttings and anything of value to the teacher. According to Onyango (2001) material resources include those items so designed, modified and prepared to assist teaching/learning operations. He gives examples as; textbooks, reference books, teachers guides, manuals, magazines, charts, maps, raw materials such as wood and metal. Ayot (1986) refers to instructional resources as teaching resources. He calls them teaching tools that help in providing data that students use in learning. Beswick (1977) when referring to resource-based learning states that a resource includes anything which may be an object of study or stimulus for the learner. He gave examples such as books, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts and newspapers. Kemp and Dayton (1985) as quoted by Kinyua (2007) used the term instructional media to refer to audio-visual and related materials that serve instructional functions for education and training.

Lockhead (1990) said that the intended curriculum cannot be easily implemented without the necessary materials. The provision of quality and adequacy of resources in the counties through devolution affect the quality of education and how effectively the curriculum is implemented. These materials provide information, organize the scope of coverage and the sequence of information presented they also provide opportunities for students to use what they have learnt. Such materials include textbooks, teachers' guides, computers, maps, chalk and exercise books among other teaching and learning aids. Mbiti (2007) alludes that teachers cannot teach well in local schools without such supporting materials, no matter how qualified they are. Both the quantity and quality of books should be improved.

As result of Kenya's effort to attain Education for All (EFA) by 2015, it has brought a lot of effects in the Education system in Kenya especially with the decentralization of education. According to Edward (2010), there is need for a well-qualified and highly motivated teaching force to understand the needs of

the learners who are continuously increasing since the introduction of Subsidized Secondary Education. In developed countries, education beyond the compulsory level was usually financed in part and sometimes wholly by the state. In Sri Lanka, has achieved free education due to its widely distributed schooling instructional facilities throughout the Island. The quality of education has been enhanced by free textbook scheme for all children up to junior secondary, innovative curriculum development and high quality teacher training and in-service programmes, (Colelough and Lewin, 2003).

In Britain, education up to secondary school level is fully financed by the government (Moon & Mayes, 1994). Parents are only required to ensure that children attend school. The main intention of any Governments is that all children from the ECDE to the secondary level access education without discrimination in accordance with the (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2007). In Japan, the government fiscal policies provide for free education up to secondary school level. Those of school going age have no option other than attend school to acquire education that is fully funded by the government (Nyaga, 2005). It is this aspect that brings to light the need to determine how devolution has contributed to the provision of infrastructural materials to ECDE centers.

In Kenya more than 70% of the ECDE instructional facilities have been funded by parents, communities, churches and the private investor since 1990s. The communities are the most important partners in the development of the ECE centers. They take responsibility for the provision of physical facilities, furniture, payment of salaries, organization of feeding programmes, provision of labour and teaching/learning materials. Some communities receive financial and supervisory assistance from NGOs and local government (Kipkorir and Njenga, 1993). It is only this year that the county government was given the mandate to employ and equip ECDE teachers at the county level, therefore it was important for this study to look into the role of the county government on provision of instructional material in Keiyo south Sub-county.

It is also important that the county government through their sub-county government to acknowledge the importance of teaching and learning of materials because according to Karaka (2009) concrete materials enhances understanding of basic concepts no matter how the teacher plans, it

is the child who must learn. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning through the use of teaching/learning resources. According to him all that the teacher prepares may not be of any importance if they do not enable the child to learn. If the materials are displayed well, they pre-occupy the pupils when the teacher is not in class and this will enhance children's learning in the absence of the teacher. This can be done by displaying on walls, hangings, mobiles, soft boards using pins, placed on shelves and learning centers like shop corners, curiosity tables among others. According to The School Infrastructure improvement works have been going on since 2004 when initial disbursements were made to North eastern province. This study which focused on the regular as the emergency was only confined to areas affected by the 2007/08 post-election violence according to (Matheka 2005). The involvement of the County government in infrastructure development is driven by the following factors: (i) the need to get rid of over-crowded classrooms; (ii) the cater for the increase of school-age children to be accommodated in new classrooms, (iii) the need to replace the stock of sub-standard classrooms built by parents, (iv) the need to replace aging and deteriorating existing stock classrooms and (v) to improve the quality of construction. The schools to benefit are selected based on defined criteria (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007).

A report by the MOEST (2007) found out that the neediest schools were selected by DEBs through criteria that focused on the following; Number of permanent classrooms; Number of permanent toilets, Number of semi-permanent classrooms, Number of semi-permanent toilets, Number of classes conducted outside and Number of children without desks. The programme is managed at three levels: at National level there is School Infrastructure Management Unit (SIMU) while at the district level there is a District Infrastructure Coordination Team (DICT) that manages the programme. The DICT is a multi- sectoral team that approves the school infrastructure development plans, monitors progress and liaises with the DEB for ratification of the school infrastructure development plans (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007). Most schools face challenges in infrastructural development, this research intends to find out how devolution system of government has facilitated the provision of infrastructural development in ECDE centers.

Children learn better by manipulating materials and make sense out of it. For a long time, there has been a debate on the best time to introduce instructional resources in number work in the life of a learner. The pre-school curriculum is thus designed to include learning of number work since it has emerged that the best time to introduce instructional resources in number work to a learner is at the pre-school age ECDE policy guideline (2006). It is therefore prudent that the county government invest in providing ECDE teachers with relevant instructional material that exploit the creativity of teachers and learners.

According Farrant (1999) stated that resources centre is involved in collecting resources, organizing them and making them available to users. It is involved in informing people of new resources and of new ideas. It organizes training and facilitates development of ideas and of new resources. It should tap peoples' ideas and skills and help them realize their ability to influence and change their own lives. The centre should make people contribute to their own learning and development. A resource centre should be a place filled with people sharing ideas, coming for advice or borrowing materials that can make them better teachers or caregivers for the children. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to examine the influence of county government on service provision in early childhood development education centres in Elgeyo Marakwet County: a case of Keiyo South Sub-County Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the world, nations aspire to create sturdy and operative policies for children's education through decentralization of education. This has not been different in Kenya and Elgeyo Marakwet County in particular. In 1985 DICECE which actualized the decentralization of the ECDE program to the district level was founded. Through the Sessional paper No.1 of 2005 Kenya government responded to the EFA policies by recommending the advancement of a comprehensive ECD policy Framework and service standard guidelines to ensure quality service and access to ECDE. In Kenya, the government and other stakeholders have

put in place measures to improve delivery of the ECDE services to the Kenyan child. ECDE services were mainly community supported. In 2010 a new Kenyan constitution was enacted whose function was to devolve services to county governments, ensuring equity, access, quality and special attention to the minorities and marginalized groups. Nevertheless, there are still major challenges that affect the efficient and effective implementation of the ECDE programme. In addition few in terms of information have been reported about access and service provision in ECDE centers (MOEST, 2012). It is on this basis that this study sought to investigate the influence of service provision in ECDE centres under devolved government in Keiyo South Sub-county Elgeyo Marakwet County Kenya for the last two year since ECDE was devolved.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the extent to which devolution has enhanced availability of instructional materials in ECDE centres in Keiyo Sub-County in order to improve service delivery
2. To establish the role of county government in improving infrastructural facilities in order to improve service delivery in ECDE centres in Keiyo South Sub-County

Research Methods and Materials

Descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. This research attempted to determine the degree in which factors exist and try to discover the links or relationships that exist between them. This study sought to uncover the role of county government in service provision in ECDE centres. Descriptive survey design is useful in the collection of original data from a population which is too large to observe directly. In this case, data was collected from DICECE program officer, ECDE teachers and parent's representatives. The total target population was 546 respondents.

Table 1: Total Population

Category	Target population
DICECE Program Officer	1
Head teachers	136

ECDE Teachers	408
ECDE Parent Representative	136
Schools	136
Total	546

Source, (Keiyo South Sub County Statistics, 2015)

The researcher used 10% to sample the 14 head teachers and 14 ECDE Parent Representative since the authors recommend a sample of between 10% and 30%. To sample the teachers, one teacher was

sampled from each target school to get 136 ECDE teachers. The study also used purposive method to select 1 DICECE Program Officer. Therefore, the sample was 165 respondents.

Table 2: Sample Size

Category	Target population	Sample size	Percentage %
DICECE Program Officer	1	1	100
Head teachers	136	14	10
ECDE Teachers	408	136	33.3
ECDE Parent Representative	136	14	10
Total	546	165	

Both stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to arrive at the sample size.

Measures

Questionnaires were used to obtain information from 136 ECDE Teachers and Interview schedule were administered to 1 DICECE Program Officer, 14 Head teachers and 14

To determine the reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) the split-half method was applied. The correlation obtained was 0.72 which was above 0.6 therefore the instruments were deemed reliable (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Since the study employed descriptive survey design questionnaires collected from the field were checked to confirm if all questions have been answered and data was coded. Quantitative data was first organized into themes, and then descriptive statistical method was used to explain the frequencies and percentages calculated from the data obtained in the field. This information was presented in tabular form to make

interpretation clearer. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically based the set objectives

Findings and Discussion

Availability of Instructional Materials

The first objective sought to find out the extent to which devolution has enhanced availability of instructional materials in ECDE centres in Keiyo Sub-County in order to improve service delivery. In the teachers questionnaires, the respondents were told to rate their level of agreement on a five likert scale questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was measured on a scale of 1–5 where 1- strongly agreed, 2-agreed, 3- undecided, 4-disagreed and 5 - strongly disagree. The results of data analysis are presented as shown below.

Availability of Instructional Materials

	1		2		3		4		5	
	SA		A		UN		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
County Government provides funds for text books to ECDE centers	0	0	29	22.5	0	0	100	77.5	0	0
The County Government allocates funds for purchase of Outdoor play materials	0	0	30	23.3	4	3.1	95	73.6	0	0
County Government monitors and evaluates the resource availability in ECDE centers through education coordinator	0	0	34	26.4	0	0	91	70.5	4	3.1
The County Government does not effectively provide instructional materials to ECDE centers	0	0	90	69.8	9	7.0	30	23.3	0	0

n=129

Table 4.5 shows that 100 (77.5%) ECDE teachers disagreed that the county government has provided funds for text books to ECDE centers while 29 (22.5%) agreed. Further, 95 (73.6%) ECDE teachers disagreed that the County Government allocates funds for purchase of outdoor play materials, 30 (23.3%) ECDE teachers agreed, while the rest 4 (3.1%) were undecided. Similarly, 91 (70.5%) ECDE teachers' disagreed that the county Government monitors and evaluates the resource availability in ECDE centers through education coordinator, 34 (26.4%) agreed while the rest 4 (3.1%) were undecided. In addition, 90 (69.8%) agreed that the County Government does not effectively provide instructional materials to ECDE centers, 30 (23.3%) disagreed whereas 9 (7.0%) were undecided.

From the findings based on the interview schedule of DICECE program officer, ECDE Parent representatives and head teachers, it was noted that the DICECE program officers indicated that from the very onset, devolution was intended to bring essential services closer to the people. Moreover one of the head teachers said that: *"Whilst Devolution has succeeded in starting to address the issues of inequality in resource allocation and service delivery, it is yet to fully address uneven growth and provision of instructional materials in ECDE centres in this area."* As such most of the ECDE Parent representatives said that some of the resources are still managed by

CDF, not much has been done by the county government. They further indicated most of these resources which are still managed by the CDF and other stakeholders have to be released to the County Governments to facilitate the provision of infrastructure.

It was noted that most of the teachers in the Keiyo South Sub-county were not satisfactorily provided funds for text books to ECDE centres used by teachers and learners neither have they allocated funds to be used in procurement of outdoor play materials in the centre. They also noted that the Sub-county do not have policies that monitor or evaluates the resource availability in ECDE centers through sub-county education coordinator. The DICECE program officer, ECDE parent representatives and head teachers noted that there is still conflict among the devolution organs the CDF and the county government on who to employ them hence derailing efforts of service delivery in ECDE centres in the sub-county.

From the response of the teachers on the issue of text books majority of the teachers said that the county has not adequately provided funds for text books to ECDE centres, and have not allocated funds for purchase of outdoor play materials. Moreover they do not monitor or evaluates the resource availability in ECDE centers through the education coordinator and have not effectively provided instructional materials to ECDE centers.

From the responses of the DICECE program officer, ECDE Parent representatives and head teachers it was noted that there is still conflict among the devolution organs, the CDF and the county government which has hindered the development of infrastructure in the sub-county. On the same the importance of instructional materials was noted by Lockheed (1990) who said that any curriculum cannot be easily implemented without the necessary materials. He further said that the provision of quality and adequacy of instructional resources in the counties through devolution affect the quality of education and how effectively the curriculum is implemented. This is because these materials provide information, organize the scope of coverage and the sequence of information presented they also provide opportunities for students to use what they have learnt. This corroborates Mbiti (2007) who noted that teachers in the local areas cannot do

Types of Infrastructural Development

	Frequency	Percent
Classroom construction	42	32.6
Provision of teaching materials	29	22.4
Library development	20	15.5
Increase in learning materials to learners	38	29.5
Total	129	100

n=129

Table 4.6 shows that 42(32.6%) ECDE teachers reported that the county has constructed more classrooms, 29(22.4%) ECDE teachers indicated that the county government has provided teaching materials for them, 20(15.5%) ECDE teachers indicated that the county government has developed libraries while the rest 38(29.5%) said that the county has increased learning materials to learners. It follows therefore that a majority 32.6% of the ECDE teachers in Keiyo South Sub-county indicated that the county government has developed more classrooms in the sub-county and therefore this could improve the service delivery in the centre. It was noted that most of the teachers in the sub-county have been involved in development of the classroom. They have however done little in developing of well-equipped libraries in ECDE centres in Keiyo South Sub-county. The teachers' views on what the Sub-county has done to improve infrastructure showed that a lot have been done in development of classroom but a lot of efforts need to be put developing well-equipped library in the ECDE centres in Keiyo South Sub-county.

without such supporting materials, no matter how qualified they are. Both the quantity and quality of books should be improved. It is therefore imperative that the county government provides quality, adequate materials and on time.

Types of Infrastructural Development by County Government

The second objective of this study was to find out whether devolution has enhanced availability of instructional materials in ECDE centres in Keiyo Sub-County in order to improve service delivery. To achieve this objective, the teachers were asked to state the types of infrastructural development which have been initiated by county government to improve teacher's service delivery as well. The results of data analysis are presented in as shown below.

From the response of the teachers, it was noted that most of the teachers stated that the county has done a lot in the development of classroom. However they put up a well-equipped library in the ECDE centres in Keiyo South Sub-county. It is important that the county government provide well equipped classrooms and other physical infrastructure. The involvement of the County government in infrastructure development is driven by the following factors as noted by Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2007), was to reduce over-crowded classrooms; to cater for the increase of school-age children, replace the stock of sub-standard classrooms and aging and deteriorating existing books and to improve the quality of construction.

Conclusions

On the first objective it was concluded that the Elgeyo Marakwet County has not provided enough funds for Keiyo South Sub-county to procure text books and other relevant instructional materials used by ECDE teachers. They have not availed enough money to be used in procurement of

instructional materials in the centres. The sub-county itself has no monitoring and evaluating system that monitors how resource availability through the sub-county education coordinator.

Secondly the study concluded that the Sub-county government of Keiyo South has provided funds which have been used in classroom construction, latrines and desks at ECDE centres. This is geared towards improving service delivery in the centers. However little has been done in providing teachers with teaching materials, medical allowances as well as equipping and developing new libraries.

Policy Implication

1. There is need for all stakeholders including the central government, county governments the community and the companies through their corporate responsibility framework to contribute financially and materially in the provision

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of instructional materials and resources for the teaching in ECDE centres in Keiyo Sub-County.

2. The county government of Elgeyo-Marakwet, the central Government and the community should allocate more funds to cater for infrastructural development in the schools. This would ensure that the schools construct more classrooms, libraries and classrooms. The headteachers and School management and principals should attract more funds from Constituency development funds, Non-governmental organizations and the Church so as to enhance infrastructural development and reduce dependence on Parent Teacher associations for the same. This would supplement the county government funding.

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